Draft of Sub-Sub-Committee Report
(by Haerle, not discussed yet with Tracey and Arlinda)

Topic: "Economics and Human Behavior" Seminar in the Pre-Enrollment Program

General Evaluation

In general, the seminar component of the Pre-Enrollment Program--in 1981 entitled "Economics and Human Behavior"--was successful. Almost everyone thought that the seminar format should be retained. A few suggested that the topic or content of the seminar might be changed.

On the "plus" side of the ledger, the following observations were offered.

1. The seminar offered diversity--different perspectives on the same problem, different professors and their personalities, different teaching styles, exposure to new disciplines.

2. The seminar presented an opportunity to experience the "more normal" lecture course. References were made to tests and papers, opportunities for discussion, intensive coverage, and adapting to the different lecture styles of the three teachers.

3. The seminar stood in rather sharp (and general positive) contrast to the other courses in the Pre-Enrollment courses. The latter were perceived as dealing with the more routine tasks of education and involving a good deal of review. In comparison, the seminar dealt with a topic of current interest (there was not unanimity about "interest"--see below) which allowed for debate and the expression of opinion.

4. The use of three different professors in the course was lauded. Students seemed to appreciate the opportunity to get to know several professors before the regular term began.

As might be expected, not everyone was satisfied with the seminar. Thus, on the "minus" side of the ledger, the following comments were reported. (Note how some of these will counter the "pluses" listed above.)

1. The topic of the seminar (economics and inflation) was judged by a few as uninteresting and dull or difficult to grasp. (Yet a positive side-effect was mentioned by several students. This exposure enabled them to learn, before the regular term started, that a particular subject-matter or teacher was not to their liking.)

2. Some complained about certain aspects of the course: lectures were too long (1½ hours), material too difficult to grasp, too much material covered too intensively, and difficulty in adjusting to the styles of three different professors.

(Most of the comments were expressed in the evaluation which took place immediately following the end of the Pre-Enrollment Program. In the follow-up evaluations taking place in Jan.-Feb., 1982, most of these criticisms were now seen, in retrospect, to have been accurate features of what one could expect from a schedule which contains several lecture courses during a regular term.)

3. There was some concern expressed about the lack of coherence or connection among the three sub-segments of the seminar.

Recommendations

1. We recommend that the seminar component of the Pre-Enrollment Program be retained.

2. We recommend that three professors act as co-teachers in the course. (Perhaps some discussion of whether "two" might be more effective.) However, there is need for greater co-ordination of the topic by the three participants.

3. We recommend that commitments to teach the seminar be obtained as early in the spring term as possible.

4. Consideration should be given to hiring one of the teachers as the coordinator of the seminar. It might be his/her responsibility to develop the basic theme for the course and then to solicit the commitment of the other two teachers. (These considerations should be discussed with the Director of the Pre-Enrollment Program.) (How much to "tie their hands??)

5. As much as is feasible, we recommend that the coordinator of the seminar (and the co-teachers) be made aware of the following stipulations/expectations/suggestions concerning the conduct of the seminar. These matters are designed to make the seminar experience as an exact a replica of the regular term as possible.

- The themes to be covered should be thoroughly integrated
- Consideration should be given to assigning a short research paper (see program integration below).
- To ensure that the students see the connection among the three perspectives, a "final exam," covering all three weeks, should be given.
- Each week there should be a small (i.e., 12-14 students) discussion meeting, thus necessitating two discussion periods for the professor (in order to accommodate the 20-25 students in the program).

6. We recommend that the lectures and discussions be scheduled in appropriate rooms (not the Zeplin?). Advanced planning should take place early enough to ensure such access.

Recommendations (cont'd)

7. We recommend that there be a stronger integration amongst the various courses in the program. For example, emphasis on note-taking during the lectures could be related to the study skills course. Additionally, if a short research paper is required, this could be checked by the writing skills teacher for basic grammar and stylistic features.

8. We recommend that there be a stronger integration with the student assistants. At least one student assistant should be recruited with a "specialization" or "expertise" in the substantive focus of the seminar. (Note the implications for early planning and designation of faculty participants.) Student assistants could be used to check the students' lecture notes as well.